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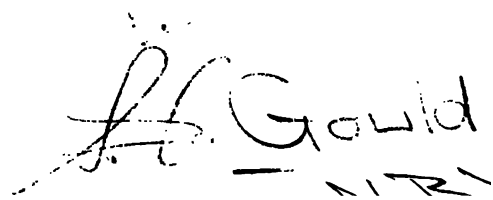
# CHILDREN OF THE SUN

BY WALLACE GOULD


Gould
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# CHILDREN OF THE SUN

# CHILDREN OF THE SUN

*Rhapsodies and Poems*

BY WALLACE GOULD

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## *To Marsden Hartley*

*Who, with me, has survived all the ninth waves and who will leave me only at some ebbing of tide which he shall choose or with which he shall naturally drift out, I present these children, for he is godfather.*

*The mother of them is dead. My life with her was stormy, in general, as with all first passions; full of all the mad pleasures and madder sorrows that grand passions contain — and mine was a grand passion of the old school, not one of these safe and sane attachments, mostly in the head, that people have these days. There were giants in those days.*

*Marsden always loved these children of mine. At times he pitied them. At times he reproved them, or me, for their sake. At times they bored him. At times he was impatient at their prattle. Yet he was always tolerant, for an obvious reason. But they are big children, now, finely developed, and I am coming to him, with my offspring stringing along behind, to remind him that he has a dread office to perform and to inform him that I am going to elope with another mistress.*

## *Note*

*I shall write no preface, for understandings which are cultivated are as tiresome as misunderstandings. However, do not call the rhapsodies poems.*

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# THE LEGEND

# CHILDREN OF THE SUN

## THE LEGEND

HE TOLD me all the legends of the place.
Up there is the loveliest countryside in Maine,
and, in the days when we first knew each other,
we used to tramp out many miles a day,
here and there
to certain ponds
or certain hills
or taverns mentioned in his little tales.
One day we started out to find a spot
whose legend was the best of any, then,
so he said.
'Twas in June.

Whistling, we walked away
from Sanford, through the Springvale countryside,
where, at a butter-smelling door, we paused,
when he inquired for a certain gorge
within which, on a day —
before the savages had disappeared
into the white men's past — a savage perished.
Instructed, we proceeded.
On the road —
a logging-road unused for decades, grassed
and alder-bordered, with a bowldered bed —
we passed a long deserted lumber-mill,
a ruin black and warped, with wind-swung doors;
a place where spiders wove their webs, to wait.

Beside the mill were weather-reddened mounds
of sawdust, and the stream by which it stood
flowed through the gorge we sought.
Crossing a bridge,
we turned upon another logging-road
which broadened to a forest-coliseum
in whose arena martyred sunbeams died,
huddling in hundreds on a wondrous bier
of high and horizontal-woven brakes —
red lilies pluming it.
We crept through brush
and gloom-starved hemlock-branches, crossing trunks
blown down in ancient storms. We heard the sound
of forest-hidden waters — changeless, deep,
even an organpoint to songs of birds
and chatterings of squirrels and the cries
of crows, antiphonal.
At length we neared
the stream. It glittered through big sapling-leaves
below us, at the entrance to the gorge.
There we descended, grasping happening roots
within the leafmould, for the bank was steep
and treacherous with loose or mossy stones.
We suddenly burst forth upon the brink.
The gorge was just beginning, we within.
Beyond us, towering, a bowlder rose
rounded and chaos-polished. By its side
a glowering crag rose. Swift, between them, poured
the stream, which curled and splashed and frothed and sprayed
and shone, sounding and sounding.
We remained
at distance, where we were, for there were pools
and sun-warmed rocks, flat, and we stripped and bathed
and afterward, while sitting in the sun
to dry, he told the legend of the gorge
and while he spoke

we gazed upon the pouring waters which twisted
and streamed
and shone
and sparkled
and frothed
and sprayed
and foamed
and glistened — glistened — glistened —
scuttling between the bowlder and the crag.
He told me, while we dried, about Ogissin
and Agomis
and the trapper, the wabishkizze.

Agomis lingered on the bowlder-summit round and chaos-polished and facing the crag beyond the waters.
Agomis looked below upon the pouring waters which curled
and twisted
and streamed
and shone
and sparkled
and frothed
and sprayed
and glistened — glistened — glistened.
Agomis downward looked and harkened long — long — long — long —
to the sounds of the curling waters which muttered
and hissed
and rumbled
and tinkled
and gurgled
and rang — rang — rang.
Agomis downward looked and harkened.
Agomis downward looked and harkened though on high an eagle swayed and swept —
though within the gorge a deer emerged to drink, timid, pausing —

though upon a blasted pine a crow was sitting, silent, watching —
though squirrels wriggled through the forest, chattering —
though a deadened pine-branch snapped to startle, with echoes sharp, somewhere within the forest, catching, rattling, tearing, descending to bounce upon the ancient stretch of spills and pound as might the mallet of a medicine-man descend
to bounce and pound upon a tam-tam
at the spirit-voyage of a chieftain.
Oh, the birds sang — sang — sang —
and the snakes basked in the first of summer suns.

And the deer upreared
and leaped
and fled
and the crow forsook the blasted pine, with utterings.
Yet Agomis downward looked and harkened long — long — long — long —
to the sounds of the curling waters which muttered
and hissed
and rumbled
and tinkled
and gurgled
and rang — rang — rang —
for she heard the voices of lovers
and the voices of dancing warriors, going to battle, returning,
and the voices of warriors sitting at feasts
and the voices of warriors speaking to warriors, proud,
and the voices of women speaking to women, happy,
and the voices of the tortured, hoarse,
and always the voices of lovers,
and Agomis sang.

" Where is Ogissin? " sang Agomis.
" Where is Ogissin whose arms are powerful?

Where is Ogissin whose flesh is sweet to smell?
Warm is the blanket of my wigwam
but warmer is the blanket of Ogissin!
Warm is the first of summer suns
but warmer is the glance of Ogissin!
Warm is the fire by my door
but warmer is the flesh of Ogissin!
Where is Ogissin whose flesh is sweet to smell?
Where is Ogissin? "

Then behind her crept the trapper, the wabishkizze, who laid his furs aside
and put around her waist a lustful arm.

And Agomis cried out, frightened.
And Agomis made escape and hurried to Ogissin
who wrapped her in his blanket with arms of power.
Then upward to the first of summer moons Ogissin raised his arms of shadow-spreading muscles
and uttered the song of them who hate.
And with the coming of the second summer sun
Ogissin hunted the trapper, the wabishkizze.

And when the third of summer suns was seen
Ogissin found a fox with silver fur — by moonlight trapped — and waited, silent, standing straight, behind a mighty trunk nearby,
until the trapper came.
Then Ogissin drew his knife.
Then Ogissin crept.
Then Ogissin sprang.
Wary was the wabishkizze, the trapper,
and he sprang aside
and he raised his gun,
but on a dead limb overgrown with grass, he caught his moccasin and reeled
and fell.

Then Ogissin sprang.
And the trapper, the wabishkizze, struggled with Ogissin.

And Ogissin struggled with the power of his arms,
but the trapper writhed in manners of other lands
and loosened the hold of Ogissin
and arose
and fled.
Then Ogissin sheathed his knife, outcrying,
and followed the trapper
and through the forest
fled the trapper —
toward the mighty bowlder round and chaos-polished and far away —
onward he fled,
slipping on spills which were matted by the decades,
stumbling on trunks which had fallen in ancient storms,
jumping from mossy stones to mossy stones,
forcing his way through hemlock-branches which had been slowly starved by the gloom,
hiding in hazel-clusters
and pausing
and peering
and listening
and hearing Ogissin
and fleeing
and pausing
and turning
and peering
and seeing Ogissin
and fleeing again.
Ogissin followed,
gaining upon the wabishkizze,
striding over the spills which were matted by the decades,
running on the trunks which had fallen in ancient storms,
leaping from mossy stones to mossy stones,

avoiding the hemlock-branches which had been slowly starved by the gloom,
watching the hazel-clusters
and gaining
and hearing the sound of rushing waters
and treading
and sidling
and peering.

Breathless, the trapper neared the bowlder round and chaos-polished
which faced the crag beyond the waters.
He came before the bowlder.

There the wabishkizze paused. He looked back. He listened. There was no sound save that of the stream, which was louder than all other sounds. Cracklings of undergrowth or twigs were as whispers at a ghost-dance. Only a dead limb, sundered, could have been heard above the waters. The wabishkizze stared. He peered. Then he uttered a low groan, as might one who feels an old pain which he had thought would never come to him again. For he saw Ogissin within a cluster of sapling birches. He shuddered. He turned toward the gorge. There was the bowlder. There was the crag, beyond. The waters could only be heard. They were too far down to be seen. There was the mighty space between the bowlder and the crag. The wabishkizze knew that he must jump or die. He knew that he might have to jump to death. He thought. He would have rushed upon the bowlder to scan the mighty space. He would have crawled over the sides to the water.
But even then Ogissin sprang from the birches
and cried aloud
and uttered the song of them who hate
and drew his knife
and rushed upon the wabishkizze
and the wabishkizze was maddened with fright. The wabishkizze braced his feet and ran, leaping, outcrying, upon the sum-

mit of the bowlder, where, shuddering, he made a last leap, running, for the crag on the other side. He reached the crag and turned, bracing his feet. Ogissin followed, leaping. Yet Ogissin did not reach the crag. He sank before the crag. He could have clutched it. He could even then have killed the trapper. But the trapper, the wabishkizze, had pulled from the ground a stone as big as the head of a man. He raised it on high, in both hands, and hurled it at Ogissin. It struck Ogissin at the breast.

It happened so.
Ogissin fell
and fell
and fell
and splashed
and floated
and floated
and floated
and sank
and sank
and sank
and was seen no more.

We dreamed for a while
and listened to the curling waters which muttered
and hissed
and rumbled
and tinkled
and gurgled
and rang — rang — rang,
while they twisted
and streamed
and shone
and sparkled
and frothed
and sprayed
and foamed

and glistened — glistened — glistened,
scuttling between the bowlder and the crag.

When we were dry
we dressed ourselves.

When we returned, we went another way
and on that way we climbed an high, round hill
whose summit had been cleared to pasture-lands
and mammoth hay-fields. Having reached the heights
we sprawled, looking below upon the towns
whose spires, protruding from the virid stretch,
seemed like as many old maids at croquet,
and whose far-rolling columns of factory-smoke
seemed dragons bent on conquest of the line
of Appalachian courtiers in the west,
who, conscious of their first right to the sun,
lay in it, powdered, ermined, splendid, proud,
impassable in frigid majesty —
whose foothills, grim, seemed couchant hounds on guard.
Eastward, a thousand hilltops faded out
into a fumid haze which hid the sea
at Kennebunkport, twenty miles away,

# AB UNO DISCE OMNES

# AB UNO DISCE OMNES

THERE was a place inclosed with high, stone walls
which were mossed and crumbling —
a place which was accessible by oaken, iron-bound gates
which were rotting
and the gates were closed
and locked
and barred with bars of brass.

There, alone, I came when the sun was high
and paused where the mossed walls cast a shadow—
where a warm breeze wandered through a graceful vine.

The shadow was narrow beside those walls.
Along the road rushed a drouth-dried wind which was nervous
with the weariness of summer's older days
and the wind whirled, rushing, and raised up dust in wreaths
which flourished
and glistened
and broke
and sprawled upon me
to be hot
and to torture me.
Oh, the shadow was narrow beside those walls!
There came no sound from behind those walls.
No being followed along the road.
Oh, I was weary
and famished
and sick
and maddened
and I crawled to a gate of iron-bound oak
and I lowly knocked
and I waited

and I knocked
and I listened —
but there came no answer.
There came no sound from behind those walls!
Oh, I was weary
and famished
and sick
and maddened
and the drouth-dried wind rushed along the road
and the warm breeze wandered through the graceful vine.

The shadow grew wider beside those walls
yet no being followed along the road.
Along the road swept wreaths of dust —
when I louder knocked upon that gate of iron-bound oak,
for I was weary
and famished
and sick
and maddened.
Oh, I knocked
and I murmured —
" Allow me within!
Allow me within! "
and I waited
and I listened —
yet there came no answer.
There came no sound from behind those walls
and I was weary
and famished
and sick
and maddened!

There came a western sun
and an eastern moon
while I lingered, alone, before that gate of iron-bound oak which
was closed
and locked

and barred with bars of brass —
and the warm breeze wandered through the graceful vine.
Oh, I was weary
and famished
and sick
and maddened!
Then I loudly knocked
and I kneeled
and I pleaded —
" Allow me within!
Allow me within! "
when I waited,
when I listened —
when there came no answer.
There came no sound from behind those walls
and the warm breeze wandered through the graceful vine.
Oh, the moon shone
and the stars shone
and there came upon the drouth-dried wind a resonance which made me shudder —
a resonance which soon became a noise
following the drouth-dried wind —
voices as of a bestial mob,
music as of a bacchanal,
nearing, following the road.
Shrieks I heard
and laughter
and screams
and shouts
and songs
with drums
and horns
and tambourines
and I waited
and I listened
and I looked

and I soon beheld a lambent smear of far illumination on a far,
drawn veil of vapor —
mighty as above a mighty city which is consumed by flames —
and wavering and wide —
wavering and wider —
near and nearer.
Shrieks I heard
and laughter
and screams
and shouts
and songs
with drums
and horns
and tambourines
and I pounded upon that gate of iron-bound oak
and I shuddered
and I cried —
" Allow me within!
Allow me within! "
and I waited
and I listened —
and there came no answer.
I heard no sounds save shrieks
and laughter
and screams
and shouts
and songs
with drums
and horns
and tambourines.

Then I turned
and I looked
and I beheld an approaching mob
with a thousand flambeaux which flared and smoked —
an approaching mob with drums
and horns

and tambourines.
Broadcast and blinding became the flare of the flambeaux.
Louder became the shrieks
and laughter
and screams
and shouts
and songs —
louder and hoarse,
louder and vicious.
Louder and frantic became the pounding of monstrous drums —
louder and pompous the blowing of brazen horns —
louder and blatant the ringing of tambourines —
nearer —
nearer —
louder —
louder —
louder and frantic —
louder and pompous —
louder and blatant —
and the mob approached
and I watched the passing mass of raving beings.
They vented their inherencies. Some sang
alone and closed their eyes and tottered. Some,
singing alone, smiled childishly or danced.
Choruses howled, canonical with prayer —
or hatred — some with counterpoint of both.
Some pulled at sleeves of others, whispering.
Some jostled those who went before, being pushed
by those behind. Some stumbled carelessly
upon big rocks or into crevices —
some stumbling when the rocks or crevices
were hidden by the heels of those before.
Some wrangled over others in whose eyes
lurked twinklings. Some repelled and others lured.
Hands soothed or smote, many restraining these.
Some beings were naked. Some bore up big casks

of wine, some bulging bundles, all being whipped.
The wan looked at the wan and uttered woes.
Some of the wan were weighted with great bales
of books and rambled, reading, glassy-eyed
and bloodless, what was written by their kind.
The beings who flourished lashes were at peace,
for many flourished swords, defending them
who flourished lashes. Some on crutches hopped.
Scores scoffed at other scores. Scores went with drums
and horns and tambourines and loudly played,
when, with the music mingled all the sounds
from lips which voiced defiance, mirth, despair,
rage, avarice, rebellion, ridicule,
passion, disgust, doubt, weariness. The strong
went with the strong and tantalized the weak
who clung unto the weak with blasphemies
and tears. Some hoarsely laughed and gazed before.
Some gazed behind, as searching for stray forms.
A few stared upward at the rising moon.
There were a few who walked by others, close.
There were a few being carried.
Borne along
on upraised arms, a madman, laurel-wreathed,
beckoned, and sang —
" Pound, pound the drum,
for the end has come!
Oh, the world is old!
'Tis bare! 'Tis cold!
Pan's parchments fold,
inscribed. 'Tis told
how we, for a sum,
ourselves have sold —
how we took the gold
with fingers numb!
Pound, pound the drum,
for the end has come!

Come, one and all —
come, join the brawl!
Bring timbrel and gong
for dance and song!
Bring wine along!
Come from among
the fools who bawl
for freedom or thong!
They are all wrong!
Would drink and sprawl?
Then join the brawl!
Come, one and all!

Come, centaur, away
to propine and bray!
Nymphs shall be there
to garland your hair
and banish all care!
Hippomania's fair?
Fairer are they!
Fool to forbear!
Come away, where
enwreathed you shall lay
and propine and bray!
Come, centaur, away!

Come, bacchante old,
out into the wold!
Come gaudily dressed —
purple is best,
with amethyst crest,
like light in the west!
Shrunken the mold
of your once round breast —
yet, ah! to be pressed
in a satyr's hold,

out in the wold!
Come, bacchante old!

Lead, supple faun,
over meadow or lawn,
your syrinx quick playing
while carts follow, swaying
with lambs bound for slaying
and grapes overlaying —
by leopards drawn,
leopards obeying
unmerciful flaying,
leopards of brawn!
Lead, supple faun,
over meadow or lawn!

Pound, pound the drum!
Come, follow on, come
from pronaos and pnyx!
Gather and mix,
to the castanet's clicks!
Burn luminous wicks
and tambourines thrum
even unto the Styx!
Why will you transfix
your limbs, standing dumb?
Oh, the end has come!
Pound, pound the drum!"
when a shout arose
and, for a time, the strong forgot the weak,
the weak their weakness and the wan their woes,
until the singer was no longer heard.
Then crutches rattled, lashes whirred and cracked,
swords clashed and music mixed with utterance
and all moved onward, draggled,
while I crouched,

yes, even crouched from the flambeaux-flare
and the shrieks
and laughter
and screams
and shouts
and songs
with drums
and horns
and tambourines!

Then the mob beheld me
and paused, before me.

Then someone pointed —
when many pointed —
when all cried loudly and long
in amusement
and derision
and scorn.
Then someone lifted up a stone —
when many others lifted stones
and hurled them
and bruised my flesh so it yielded blood.
Then I beat upon that iron-bound gate
and I writhed
and I wailed —
" Allow me within!
Allow me within! "
Yet there came no answer.
There came no sound from behind those walls.
Again one pointed —
when many pointed
and again cried loudly and long
in amusement
and derision
and scorn.

Then they uttered an horror-crushing howl which rose up into
the night and passed along the heavens
and thundered
and trembled
and echoed,
when they rushed upon me
and scourged me
and made me naked —
when all cried loudly and long
in amusement
and derision
and scorn,
when someone sounded upon a drum —
when many sounded upon their drums
and pompous horns
and tambourines
and sang
and screamed
and shouted
and laughed —
when the mob moved onward
and passed away
and vanished,
when the noise became a resonance
and the flare of the flambeaux became a tint
and the warm breeze wandered through the graceful vine.

Then I was alone.
Oh, I was bleeding
and naked
and famished
and sick
and maddened
and I pressed my hands against that iron-bound gate
and I shivered
and I gasped —

"Allow me within!
Allow me within!"
and I waited
and I listened —
and there came no answer.
There came no sound from behind those walls,
though I was bleeding
and naked
and famished
and sick
and maddened
and I looked above, to the midnight skies,
where the moon was waning,
where the stars seemed leering,
when I reeled
and sank
and sprawled in the dust —
when that same dust mingled with my blood
and the warm breeze wandered through the graceful vine.

Then came a being, veiled, with many slaves.
The being looked upon me,
The being bended above me
and kneeled beside me
and an hand passed over my flesh
and lips of flesh touched mine.
Then the being arose
and commanded the slaves to bear me away,
when they bore me away through an iron-bound gate which had fallen down
and into the place inclosed with high, stone walls which were mossed and crumbling.
'Twas a pillared place.
'Twas a ruined place.
'Twas a lonely place
where lizards rustled —

where vampires chattered —
where vipers glided.
'Twas a mighty place.
'Twas a deserted place.
'Twas a mockery.

Where once had been a sumptuous couch
was a crumbling marble slab
and a marble balustrade was crumbling, mossed,
and an hundred marble columns of a monstrous colonnade had fallen down and were crumbling, vined,
and an ivory throne was wracked and moulded
and a canopy of silver had fallen down and was long corroded
and upon the rise to the throne laid a skull which was overturned and around the brows of which was a silver coronet, corroded,
and beside which rested a silver bowl, corroded,
and the moon shone
and the stars shone
and into the moonlight towered a row of poplars from behind the colonnade
and before the colonnade rolled a row of weeping willows whose branches, trailing, swayed with the wind
and the wind moved like a saddened woman who listens
and the lizards rustled
and the vampires chattered
and the vipers glided
and we loved
and we kissed.
We embraced
and we loved.

Around an handle of the bowl
which rested, corroded, beside the skull
a viper coiled.
The willows swayed

with the wind which began to whisper like a saddened woman
who, listening, utters a name
and on a louder whisper
came music of violin
and violoncello
and harp
and bassoon
and piccolo
and oboe
and cymbal
and tympani —
music scarcely louder than the whispering of the wind
because of an hidden distance
within the colonnade
and the music rushed with pizzicati
and trill
and tremolo
and crash —
music scarcely louder than the whispering of the wind —
and from within the colonnade
came a skeleton in cowl
with a vase of pallid wine.

Oh, we loved
and we kissed.
We embraced
and we loved
and the music sounded louder than the whispering of the wind
and the lizards rustled
and the vampires chattered
and the vipers glided
and the skeleton in cowl
advanced beyond the colonnade and wandered amongst the
hundred marble columns which had fallen down and were
vined
and wandered

and wandered
and wandered
and a piccolo sounded alone and played a slow and rambling
air with many mordents
and the moon shone
and the stars shone
and the skeleton in cowl
wandered by the balustrade which was crumbling, mossed —
approached the rise to the throne which was wracked and
moulded —
paused before the silver bowl
and we loved
and we kissed.
We embraced
and we loved
and the music sounded louder from within the colonnade
and the violins were in tremolo
and the bassoons were hoarse and deliberate
and we loved
and we kissed.

Then the skeleton in cowl
raised the corroded silver bowl —
filled the bowl with pallid wine.
We embraced
and we loved
and I pressed the lips to mine
and the music sounded louder
and louder
and louder
and it quickened
and quickened
and quickened
and the violins were suppliant
and the bassoons were ominous
and the harps were sensuous

and the tympani were frightful
and the oboes were cruel
and the piccolos were invoking
and the violoncelli were desperate
and the cymbals were maddening
and the music grew louder
and louder
and louder
and quicker
and quicker
and quicker
and the skeleton in cowl
approached us with the silver bowl
brimming with the pallid wine
and we loved
and we kissed.
We embraced
and we loved
and the music grew louder
and louder
and louder
and quicker
and quicker
and quicker
and the violins sounded like fettered women who shriek desires for men who are denied them
and the bassoons sounded like masculine monsters groaning in the act of rape
and the harps sounded like women who murmur by the couches of drowsing lords
and the tympani sounded like hordes which come upon lands by night
and the oboes sounded like phantoms who pause at windows on moonlight nights of winter and laugh to scorn and float away across the shimmering snows

and the piccolos sounded like them who laugh in the sunshine and run along over bodies of the dying
and the violoncelli sounded like them who wander in autumn rains and weep and cry aloud with the winds
and the cymbals sounded like them who appear at thresholds and announce the coming of cuckold lords
and the music rushed with wail
and groan
and trill
and rumble
and crash
and the lizards rustled
and the vampires chattered
and the vipers glided.

On the crumbling marble slab
where once had been the sumptuous couch
we reclined
and we loved
and we kissed.
We embraced
and we loved
and the skeleton in cowl
came near
and nearer —
holding forth the silver bowl
brimming so with pallid wine
and we loved
and we kissed.
We embraced
and we loved
and the music grew louder
and louder
and louder
and the branches of the weeping willows, trailing, swayed with the wind, unheard,

and the lizards rustled, unheard,
and the vampires chattered, unheard,
for the music grew louder
and louder
and louder
and quicker
and quicker
and quicker
and the violins sounded like women who cry out in palpitation
and the bassoons sounded like masculine monsters who run at large amongst women in chains
and the harps sounded like women who exult at the strength of lords who are mighty of muscle
and the tympani sounded like hordes which come upon lands by night when there is thunder
and the oboes sounded like phantoms who sweep with the swift winds of the night-storms of winter and call to one another through the hissing snows
and the piccolos sounded like sweet-faced fools who giggle in the sunshine and pirouette upon the bodies of the dead
and the violoncelli sounded like them who wander in autumn rains and sink down by fallen trunks and moan
and the cymbals sounded like them who appear at thresholds for the second time and announce the coming of cuckold lords
and the music rushed with shriek
and groan
and rumble
and crash
and the skeleton in cowl
stood beside the crumbling slab,
holding forth the silver bowl —
offering me the pallid wine
and I gasped
and I paused
and I laughed
and I pressed the lips to mine.

Then I grasped the silver bowl.
Around an handle of the bowl
coiled the viper, gaping, hissing —
and the viper hissed unheard
for the music shrieked
and wailed
and groaned
and trilled
and rumbled
and crashed
and throbbed
and throbbed
and throbbed
and became a din
and again I gasped
and paused
and laughed.

Then I raised the silver bowl.
Then the skeleton in cowl
stood beside us, motionless,
and the head sank down upon the breast
and the cowl fell down and hid the countenance
and the arms hung loose and low as burdened with the vase
and the music became a charivari
and trembled
and trembled
and trembled
and quickened
and quickened
and quickened
and wailed
and rumbled
and crashed
and I drank the pallid wine
and the dregs were the dust of a thousand years

and the dung of vipers
and I shuddered
and I cursed
and the skeleton raised the head
and the cowl hung down and hid the countenance
and the arms hung loose and low as burdened with the vase
and the viper which coiled, gaping, around the handle of the bowl
pierced my fingers with its fangs
and the music ceased, upon a note,
and left a sudden silence
and the wind sounded like a saddened woman who, listening, utters a name
and the lizards rustled
and the vampires chattered
and the vipers glided.

Then I flung away the bowl
and it fell
and it struck
and it sounded
and the lizards scurried
and the vampires fluttered
and screamed
and arose in a cloud which spread abroad and obscured the waning moon
and they rumbled
and they thundered
and the vipers hissed.

Then the skeleton in cowl
raised the vase of pallid wine
and turned
and wandered away
and wandered
and wandered
and wandered

and disappeared within the colonnade whose hundred marble columns had fallen down and were crumbling, vined,
and into the starlight towered the row of poplars from behind the colonnade
and before the colonnade rolled the row of weeping willows whose branches, trailing, swayed with the wind
and the wind moved like a saddened woman who listens
and I moaned
and I arose
and wandered by the balustrade which was crumbling, mossed —
approached the rise to the throne which was wracked and moulded
and I wandered out of the ruined place
and beside the walls of the ruined place
was an unknown shore of a sounding ocean
and I sank upon the sands.

The sands of that unknown shore were broadened to a vast expanse by an ebbing which seemed to be endless and were forsaken by all beings
and the wave-forsaken rocks were draped with weeds which hung like corpses impaled upon battlements
and along the shore rushed a wind from across a thousand miles of ocean
and the stars and the waning moon were dimmed by smearings of vapor from an approaching storm
and the heavens and the ocean were blended by the glooms of the distant storm
and the wind rushed onward and onward from across a thousand miles of ocean
and sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the ocean sounded
and sounded
and sounded

and I was supine
and I was naked
and the sands arose
and hissed
and drifted around me
and upon me
and my hairs mingled with the sands
and my arms were thrown outward upon the sands
and my fingers clutched the sands
and were embedded
and my eyes were closed
and the wind rushed onward and onward from across a thousand miles of ocean
and sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the ocean sounded
and sounded
and sounded —

— sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and no ship passed upon that ocean
and no bird passed through the air
and there were no footprints in the sands save mine
and for hours I remained unmoving, upon the sands
while the wind rushed onward and onward from across a thousand miles of ocean
and sounded
and sounded
and sounded —
while the sands arose
and hissed
and drifted around me
and upon me —
while the ocean sounded

and sounded
and sounded.

Then, when the moon and stars had long been hidden —
when the waters had drawn themselves afar into the glooms —
a being came near me
and kneeled beside me
and fingers of flesh found mine within the sands
and pressed them
and the being bended above me
and lips of flesh touched mine,
yet I remained unmoving
and my eyes remained closed
and the wind rushed onward and onward from across a thousand
miles of ocean
and sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the ocean sounded
and sounded
and sounded —

— sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the fingers dropped mine
and an hour passed
while the sands arose
and hissed
and drifted around me
and upon me,
when a low voice said —
" and we loved
and we kissed.
We embraced
and we loved — "
Yet I remained unmoving

and my eyes remained closed
and the wind rushed onward and onward from across a thousand miles of ocean
and sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the ocean sounded
and sounded
and sounded —

— sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the voice was silent
and an hour passed
while the sands arose
and drifted around me
and upon me,
when a low voice said —
" — and for a moon the wind shall blow in my face
for even tonight I am going afar across a thousand miles of ocean
and my garments shall trail behind me and far beyond your reach — "
Yet I remained unmoving
and my eyes remained closed
and the wind rushed onward and onward from across a thousand miles of ocean
and sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the ocean sounded
and sounded
and sounded —

— sounded
and sounded
and sounded

and the voice remained silent
and an hour passed
while the sands arose
and hissed
and drifted around me
and upon me,
when the being went away in silence.
Yet I remained unmoving
and my eyes remained closed
and the wind rushed onward and onward from across a thousand
miles of ocean
and sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the ocean sounded
and sounded
and sounded —

— sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the sands arose
and hissed
and drifted around me
and upon me
and my hairs mingled with the sands
and my arms remained thrown outward upon the sands
and my fingers clutched the sands
and were embedded
and the wind rushed onward and onward from across a thousand
miles of ocean
and sounded
and sounded
and sounded
and the ocean sounded
and sounded
and sounded.

# OUT OF SEASON

# OUT OF SEASON

'TWAS at Old Orchard when summer was feeble with
motherhood which had been abused
and was sallow and hollow-eyed and weary of bearing
children.
'Twas in the careless and hopeless turning of life which man
calls August,
when the mother was done with cradle-songs
and crooned old passion-songs with a quaking tongue.
'Twas in those days when poor summer was strutting in the rags
of old ribaldries.

The ocean was a warrior reclining naked and proud of being
looked upon
by those whose eyes sparkled with mighty lusts
or mighty illusions
or mighty woes,
or glimmered with the dreams of them.
The warrior was proud of his nakedness
and slumbered unannoyed by the exodus of bundle-clouds
which hurried away across the azure-plains
even as children going on crusades —
unannoyed by the vessels which crawled across his fearful ex-
panse of breasts.
Slumbering, the warrior snored.
Slumbering, he carelessly acknowledged the tributes from the
sun.
Slumbering, he seemed to know that across his breasts and
around his loins
lolled wind-women, lust-hot, to sigh and tease.
Slumbering, he throbbed.

There were two musicians who wandered about the town and
along the beach.

There was a man who wore a fancy vest of silk brocade.
There was a painted woman wearing many beads.

One musician had no arms
and he played a mouth-harp fixed to a rack which was strapped to his shoulders,
and one musician sang, and he had arms.

For years the man who had arms had wandered in streets
and sung
and sung
and sung
and waited upon the man who had no arms,
performing duties which make men shudder —
the dressing,
undressing,
the washing,
the feeding
and other things which make men shudder.

There was a reason. Years before, they had started out, one Sunday morning, for the beach, on an excursion. Both had drunk heavily before breakfast, intending to make a day of it. By the time they reached the depot they were dizzy and silly. There was a big crowd, as usual on excursions. The boys stood by the track in order to dive for seats in the smoker. The train was making up. They began fooling. One lurched. The train was passing slowly. The one who lurched dropped under a car, in a heap. The other leaped after him, stooped, crawled, pushed him to the other side of the track and beyond it, then drew back. He was too late to save himself, however. The wheels took away his arms at the elbows, even grazing the head. The man whose arms remained was grateful, of course, and swore that he would never forsake the man whose arms had been taken away. He consecrated his life to this duty;
so, for years he had sung in streets with him who had no arms, though he was tired of singing in streets

and of performing duties which make men shudder —
the dressing,
undressing,
the washing,
the feeding,
and other things which make men shudder.
He sang
and sang
and sang.

The man who had arms was singing on the beach.
He sang
and sang
and sang
and passed the cap of him who had no arms
while he who had no arms was playing the mouth-harp fixed to the rack
and played
and played
and played
and the man who wore the fancy vest of silk brocade
waited beyond the crowd,
listening to the songs
and the painted woman wearing many beads
waited beyond the crowd,
playing with her beads.

The name of the man who had no arms was Jimmie.
The name of the man possessing arms was Bennie.

Bennie, doing the crowd, passed the cap to the man with the fancy vest.

The man spoke to him.

"How would you like a regular job?"

"What doing?"

The singer was disinterested and impatient.

"Singing — steady, for the winter."

The singer turned away.

" Eighteen dollars a week," persisted the man, touching the arm of the other.

The singer turned back.

" My name — " continued the man, intercepting any reply and ignoring any attempt — " my name is Higgins. I have a moving-picture business in Caribou. There's steady work for a year, anyway. Got to have somebody that'll come and stay — no rummies or fatheads. You look like the right man. You can certainly eat them songs up. What do you say? "

The singer was looking away — somewhere — and the sleeping warrior obstructed his vision. He heard the harmonica. He shuddered. He was silent.

" I'll pay your fare up," said Higgins, " and board is cheap up there."

" Can't," murmured the singer, clutching the money-cap.

" Well —," said Higgins, taking a chew of tobacco — " it's a hell of a lot better than the proposition you're up against, I'll bet a five-sheet. You ain't got to tramp streets in all weathers and climates. Your money is sure every Tuesday. If you work alone the money is all yours — "

" Can't," murmured the singer, clutching the money-cap.

" What's the matter? Want more money ? " — and Higgins spat, as if to clear for further action.

"You don't understand," said the man who had arms, with a snarl, " I'm duty-bound to see this guy through. He saved my life and lost his arms doing it. So I'm up against it."

" I see! " exclaimed the man with the fancy vest, with a clever assumption of compassion grafted into his surprise.

For a minute both were silent. Higgins looked straight at the singer. The singer looked carelessly at the sea. There was the smoke of a steamer which must have been headed for Europe. It was probably bearing hundreds of people away toward wherever they wished to go and for reasons of their own in going. Why could some people go wherever they wished? Because they had enough money. That was the only reason

the singer could find. He was startled by hearing Higgins remark—

"Well, think it over, anyhow."

"I will—" and the man who had arms really meant what he said, though he didn't realize it, at the time. He aroused and was going.

"All right, Mr——"

"Meighan."

"Meighan. All right. I'll be around here for a week."

"See you later," called Bennie, who was even then hurrying to his work
where he sang
and sang
and sang—
where the man who had no arms played the mouth-harp fixed to the rack
and played
and played
and played.

That night the man who had arms met the painted woman wearing many beads
and she smiled on him
and he smiled on her.
They were friends
and they paused
and conversed in murmurs, smiling—
she playing with her beads.

Women passed and wished they had the courage.
Men passed, too, and wished they had the woman.

Before he left her he told her of his prospect
and when he left her he sauntered into a bar-room and ordered beer
and sipped it
and conversed with others who sipped.

Laughing, the painted woman hurried to his room,
playing with her beads,
glancing with glittering eyes.
She cautiously opened the door.
The light from other places entered at a window.
The man who had no arms was stretched on the bed, asleep.
The woman lighted a lamp.
Then he who had no arms awoke and uttered ludicrous noises,
being confused,
and waggled his armstubs
and raised himself
and sat upright
and stared
and laughed.
The woman laughed with him who had no arms,
for they were friends.

Later, while she applied her powder-puff, she observed — "Dandy offer your partner had, wasn't it?"

It was, whatever it was. It must have been, it seemed. But Jimmie wondered why his partner had not mentioned it. What was it?

Jimmie did not answer at once. His eyes became suddenly wide open. He was staring for the first time, spellbound, at what he had been watching constantly, for years.

'Tis a way we have.

For what seemed the first time, he had reason to believe that his partner was considering or was even willing to consider forsaking him. What seemed the first proof of the long-realized process of change with its long-expected event came to him who had no arms and was terrifying and staggering, and more so — we are marvelously peculiar — more so than had there been no warning. He was indignant, infuriated.

'Tis a way we have.

The man who had no arms
forever nourished a whim.

"Don't you think so?" persisted the woman, having finished her toilet.

"Great!" exclaimed Jimmie, posing as one who is pleased with anything at all. He turned pale—

She sat on the edge of the bed.

"If he accepts, are you going with him?" she added, carelessly, playing with one of his empty shirtsleeves.

He shrugged his shoulders, and, turning his head, gazed toward a corner of the room.

"Perhaps," he murmured. Yet he knew he would not go. He knew that Bennie did not want him. He knew that Meighan was taxing martyrdom and had been doing so for too many years. At first, Meighan had been a servant — kind, anxious, compassionate. At every opportunity he had shared his amours with his partner. He had helped the helpless man at baths and performed with the greatest patience the necessary but repulsive services which armless people require. He had carefully put the cripple in bed every night and had remained with him to talk, or read aloud. But solicitude had changed to tolerance. The servant had become a patron. Jimmie was the one who fully realized that — Jimmie alone. 'Twas long before that, that Meighan had gradually become disagreeable, indifferent, brutal. Jimmie had not known the embrace of a woman for more than a year before the appearance of the painted woman wearing may beads and it was she, not he, who had begun the affair. Then, too, baths were possible only when the two happened to be near the sea and even then his clothes were hastily drawn on over an undried skin. The undeniably repulsive duties were often neglected to the point of danger to health or even life. At the lunch-counters the dependent jaws waited inactive for minutes at a time or labored ludicrously with excessive quantities of cold food which had been crammed between them by one who ate his own meals with as few interruptions as possible. At night, the animate manikin was denuded and left to mechanically crawl into bed. It frequently remained in bed — or, at any rate, in the bedroom for an entire Sunday regardless of

physical or sentimental desires. So, what were the chances of his being taken along? No. If Meighan intended to go, he intended to go alone. Jimmie knew that for him there was nothing but the poorhouse. His folks were dead. Of course there was nothing but the poorhouse.

The man who had no arms
forever nourished a whim.

The man who had arms
forever thought of him who had no arms
and of himself
and he was bound —
bound by the empty sleeves of him who had no arms.

In time, inevitably, he began to compare his lot with that of others in the great drift of things.

Everything went its course — perhaps to consummation, perhaps to destruction. Nevertheless, everything went. Everyone went his way — perhaps to happiness, perhaps to failure. Nevertheless, everyone went. Nothing remained, stagnant. Nobody waited, chained. Nobody looked over the shoulder save at lust. Nothing of him had been left under the train. His body had been brought forth whole, and more, the desire for independent existence was as whole as the body. Once, he had an impression, a lurking impression, that Jimmie might have had the same desire along with his incomplete body, and the impression created an embarrassment comparable with that of one who, passing along a street, hears a sardonic laugh from behind closed window-blinds. Then he ceased comparing. He ceased thinking. He knew only that he wanted to be free
and he trembled
even as a prisoner trembles at the sight of the skies and the hills when the prison door has been left ajar by the drowsing jailor, and swings with an happening wind —
and movement made him tremble
for everything around him moved.

Sometimes he wondered why some beings are bound together — wondered who binds them and by what right they are bound —
and he trembled,
though he ever thought of the man who had saved his life
and his arms,
and he sang
and sang
and sang.

Sometimes he experienced a sensation of swaying, suspended. It was caused by the maneuvering of the thong of convention which evolution had found in the gutter, binding one who was aware of being bound yet who was unable to unbind himself — the thong which evolution was holding up by the trailing end, in derision. It was then that the singer wondered which was worse, the poorhouse for one when there was nothing else or the eternal singing in streets for another when there were other things
and he trembled,
though he ever thought of the man who had saved his life
and his arms
and he sang
and sang
and sang.

Are not worthless years an exorbitant price for a drunken day?
Are not worthless years a poor exchange for a moment of pain
which might have ended pain?
So he chanted —
often chanted —
almost aloud —
though he ever thought of the man who had saved his life
and his arms
and he sang
and sang

and sang
and trembled
and gasped,
for his throat seemed bound with the empty sleeves of a shirt
the body of which was filled with useless flesh.

The man who had no arms
forever nourished a whim.

Days passed.

Bennie, suspended by the thong, at an height far greater than any he had ever known, swung forth and back between principle and evasion. He swung till he was dizzy and the thong was frayed. He longed to be on the ground with other people yet he dared not sever the thong. The distance from the ground was too great. He dreaded even a further fraying of the fibres. Consequently he continued to swing. He knew only that he was suspended. He was afraid to know anything else. His mind nearly ceased to act, he was so dizzy. He merely desired, vaguely desired. Suddenly the action of the thong was stopped. It was arrested by the hand of the man with the fancy vest.

Higgins searched for the singer, one night. They met on the depot platform. It was after Jimmie had been left to go to bed. Meighan was wandering around the edges of the crowd — and there was a crowd, though the hour was late, for it was the last night of the season. Too, it was raining and the platform was the only sheltered promenade. There was dissension amongst the wind-women. They had aroused the sleeping warrior to a state of wrath. Far out in the darkness they wrangled, their shrill bedlam dominated by the majestic intonation of the hen-pecked titan, some of them rushing inland, groaning, snarling, dripping with cold perspiration and fitfully slatting the downpour this way and that, as women do neckties and shirts which happen to be left lying around. Everyone was draggled. The platform was splashing with sand-mixed

puddles. The rain was monotonously noisy and violent. Sometimes it clattered so that voices had to be raised. Meighan was wandering around the edges of the crowd. Higgins came out of the crowd. Without making the slightest salutation he hastily asked what the singer would do about going to Caribou. Not receiving an immediate answer he continued, elaborating upon the opportunity and emphasizing the logic of acceptance. Suddenly, seeming to have exhausted all points of argument, he ceased and looked straight at the eyes of the singer, waiting for the effect. There was none. Meighan was impaled. He was faint. Within him was measureless desire, turbulent and augmenting, yet fastened somehow by some painful and tantalizing power, like the tail of a snake which is pinned to a stump by children called innocent. Under such a strain a woman would scream and fall to the ground or run away in silence and wander in solitude. Under such a strain a man would do either — if not afraid of being seen. Meighan was perhaps afraid of being seen. His eyes were glassy. He leaned against a post of the platform-roof and began trimming his fingernails. That was an habit of his, not an esthetic.

"You wait here for a few minutes," said Higgins, at length, "I'm going over to the shine chair and have my shoes oiled. Think it over. I'll be right back. Have a shine?"

"No," murmured Meighan.

"All right. Wait."

Higgins re-entered the crowd.

Attached to the post against which Meighan was leaning was a rainspout through which water scuttled, gurgling and tinkling, as though chuckling. Rain was being driven against his back, but he didn't care. He was callous. He was dazed. Some things happened. Others did not. So he sized things up. Soon even that philosophy dimmed out. He was not even thinking. Soon, again, the thong started swinging. It started with a jerk. He thought of the man who had no arms,
and of himself
and he trembled

and argued
and cursed
and despaired.

The thong swung recklessly, irregularly. The frayed portion was pulling apart. Fibre after fibre snapped. The desire to be himself and claim his natural inheritance grew stronger. It became savage. The idea of duty weakened, though it clung with undeniable fortitude. Finally the last strand snapped—snapped so quickly that Meighan was not aware of the snapping. He was not conscious of falling. He knew only that he struck the ground. There he was, on both feet, with other people.
He was really there.
He looked about
and closed his knife
and put it away
and hurried to find the man with the fancy vest
and on his way he lowly hummed —

" Everybody's doin' it.
Doin' what?
Doin' what? "

He passed the painted woman wearing many beads.

She was talking with a fakir, at a bazar. Meighan pulled her waist, as he went by. She turned. He tipped his hat.

" So long," he called back.

" So long, kid," she answered, somewhat seriously — " where are you going? "

" Caribou."

" Caribou? "

" Caribou."

" So long," and she turned back, quickly, to her conversation. Meighan thought she was indifferent and he hurried on again, to find the man with the fancy vest.

Higgins was still in the shoe-shining chair. Bennie waited at a distance, for a moment. Higgins beckoned, so the other

advanced and stood beside the chair. The singer stared at the boot-black for a while. He was trembling. He was twitching his closed lips this way and that.

"How about it?" called Higgins.

Meighan nodded, gazing at the working bootblack.

"Good!" exclaimed Higgins, explosively.

Meighan smiled, gazing at the working bootblack.

"Be here at eleven, tomorrow forenoon," continued the other, "the train goes at ten minutes past."

"All right," said Meighan, smiling happily.

"Don't fail."

"No."

The man who had arms turned and moved away. He carried his head high. His eyes sparkled with the sense of freedom — freedom in the abstract. His steps were firm and careless. Why not? He was delivered from care. It was enough to be free. Such a sudden conception of freedom, in Meighan, was like the focus of a camera — indiscriminate. It took in everything within range. It seemed to him that he ought to be allowed to select this woman here, that one there — kissing any one or all, unrestricted and unmolested. It seemed to him that he should have the right to order one man to do this thing, another that, undisputed. He elbowed the crowd, smiling. He stopped and bought a cigar. Then he went on, smoking and smiling. Soon, suddenly, a parasitic instinct asserted itself — that of celebration, which prefers success to any other state. It occurred to Meighan to get drunk. He went into a dive and bought a quart.

The painted woman wearing many beads
hurried to the room of him who had no arms —
hurried without laughing
or playing with her beads
and hurriedly opened the door. Jimmie was asleep. He awoke, startled. The woman rushed to the bedside.

"Sh!"

" What's the matter? " he stammered.

" Goodbye, honey! "

The utterance was mutilated by a kiss.

" Something happened? Going away? " exclaimed Jimmie, loudly.

" Sh! "

Another kiss.

" Me? No! " she muttered. Then, after looking sharply at him, " But you are, ain't you? Trying to give me the slip, boy? "

Jimmie stared.

" Going to give me the slip, was you? "

" What do you mean? " Jimmie gasped.

" Ain't you going away tomorrow? Bennie said he was going to Caribou — in the morning, I suppose," she muttered again, standing motionless.

Jimmie scowled. He held his breath. Then he laughed, arranging the pillows under his head, so, by an excusable movement, venting a desire to writhe.

She laughed, also.

" Never mind," she said, " I'll forgive you. You're a good kid."

Another kiss.

" Are you going with him? "

" No," whispered Jimmie, or hissed, disinterestedly.

" Going home to your folks? "

" Sure! "

He smiled.

Another kiss.

There were footsteps on the stairs, below.

" Is that him, suppose? "

She sprang toward Jimmie.

The last kiss. She tiptoed from the room and sidled around a turn in the corridor. A strange man passed. She giggled and hurried away
with a twinkle in her eyes
and playing with her beads.

The man who had no arms
forever nourished a whim.

Before leaving the dive, Meighan drank several whiskeys with a chance acquaintance of the summer. When he left, he staggered. He stumbled into his room. He lighted the lamp, reeling. Then he drank an half water-glass of whiskey. He offered another half-glass to Jimmie. Jimmie drank. Bennie sat on the bed and resumed trimming his fingernails.
Then each man said what each could not help saying
and one man raised his voice and cursed and accused
and one man uttered impatient things
and drank
and drank
and drank
and trimmed his fingernails
and one man wept who could not wipe his tears
and moaned
and complained
and waved his empty sleeves upon his armstubs
and looked at the man who trimmed his fingernails —
the man who looked away
and drank
and drank
and drank
and shrugged his shoulders.
The man who wept and could not wipe his tears
clutched the clothes of the bed in his teeth
and writhed
and sobbed
and gasped
and cried to a god
and cursed
and the other man undressed
and drank
and drank
and drank

and extinguished the light
and went to sleep to avoid what seemed the foolish talk of one who had no common sense.
Soon he snored and none could have aroused him
and he left his knife on the bed, unclosed.

The man who had no arms
forever nourished a whim
and he lay in the dark
and panted
and sobbed
and writhed
and found himself sinking into himself
and the pit was deep
and he looked above and saw a milky way of great processions
wherein were men and women who were kissing—
wherein were faceless men who fought with rusted swords—
wherein were men who ravished screaming women—
wherein were women who tore the flesh of men—
wherein were women who were kissing women—
wherein were men who were embracing men—
wherein were women who were beating bulging breasts—
wherein were men and women who were sweeping daggers and plunging them into breasts and backs and groins and clapping hands besmeared with blood—
wherein were horses which trampled in the midst, with many wild beasts—
when one of the faceless men who fought with rusted swords
approached and raised his sword above the head of him who had no arms
when he who had no arms arose
and glanced about the bed
and saw the knife that had been left unclosed
and grasped it in his teeth—
grasped it so that the blade extended toward one ear. On account of the years of playing the mouth-harp the muscles of the neck and jaws were abnormally developed, and the teeth

tightened upon the handle to hold it as firmly as might the strongest fingers. Jimmie then crept out of bed. There was no need of using caution, for Meighan was snoring in the sleep of everyone who is absolutely lost in drunkenness. He was lying on his back. Jimmie moved around the foot of the bed and stood by the side. There he paused, staring. Suddenly the sleeper moved. Jimmie started. He bent over Meighan quickly — placed the point of the blade where he thought the heart might be — with a swift movement ripped the flesh — then drove the blade downward into the gash, downward till the handle struck a bone. The trunk wriggled but slightly yet Jimmie climbed upon it and wound his legs around those of the murdered man, hugging the shoulders with his armstubs. There he waited for a few minutes. At length he felt the breast of his shirt becoming wet. He arose. The knife was still in the body. The weight of his own body had pressed the handle down so that it laid on the flesh, partly closing the knife, with the blood bubbling up around it. He would have removed the knife but he hated the idea of tasting Meighan's blood.
So he wiped the blood from his face upon the pillows
and sat in bed
and listened
and gasped
and waited
and waited
and waited.

They found them in the morning, side by side. The face of the dead was then covered and the face of the living was washed. The dead was soon dressed and straightened out and the living was dressed and led away,
with a crowd behind —
a crowd that was far more eager than any which had ever gathered around him in the streets
and the painted woman wearing many beads
followed with the crowd,
playing with her beads.

# OTHERS, NAMELESS

# OTHERS, NAMELESS

## I

Augusta is a city of dignity.
It is a city of old mansions.
The approach is wonderful.

As you ride over in the electrics, from Winthrop, you look down, you look far down, upon valley after valley, some holding lakes, until, at last, you see ahead of you heights which are greater than those upon which you are riding —
heights covered with dense forests
or farms of many acres,
with white houses
and big barns
and broad fields —
sunswept, perhaps —
heights which you feel do not rise from those upon which you ride.
If swept by the sun, their distance, as you feel it, is increased
and they are even higher by their glimmering magnificence.
You feel that there must be a valley beyond the heights upon which you ride, a mighty one.
There is a valley beyond, a mighty valley.
It is that of the Kennebec, the climax of the valleys.
Soon, you come to the city of old mansions.

On one of the days at Winthrop, I went to Augusta, for the first time. These heights were sunswept, that morning. We passed on. Then came the descent amongst the old mansions. There they were, marvelous old things, behind their towering old trees, or beyond their expansive, forbidding lawns. Then came the continued descent into the good-looking, sufficiently aged business section. Approaching this, I happened to look

down at the right, yes, still farther down, very far down. There, at last, was the Kennebec, famous, lovely, sensuous, immense, a bit indolent, that morning, dreaming away in the half-light of a forenoon fog. A four-masted schooner was asleep, dreaming, by the opposite shore. The many great, overhanging elms were sleeping, dreaming, too.

I know the dreams of the Kennebec
for the forms of my fathers appear in those dreams.
Some labor with axes, felling trees, hewing ribs for many ships.
Some tug at capstans, stand at helms, climb through riggings, watch at compasses.
Some sit in great houses, smoking, drinking, playing poker.
Some lie in gutters, drunken, dependent.
Some wander, guilt-struck.
Some hurry past, laughing.
Some kiss pretty women.
Some rise from the waters of distant seas and are dim and white and ghastly.
My mother has told me, on stormy days, the dreams of the Kennebec —
Three of her brothers are dim and white and ghastly.

## II

I have a wonderful garden.
Everything runs wild.
The grass grows high and goes to seed and the dandelions go to seed
with burdock
and plantain
and mint
and pigweed
and smartweed.

There is a mighty woodbine which hangs along the rain-trough of the barn, looped beautifully, and along the fence of the henyard. It is bronze and purple in autumn —
leaves of bronze,
berries of purple.
Birds eat the berries.
There is an old, old climbing rosebush — older than I — beside and above the front door of the house. Hundreds of big, pink roses bow its upper limbs. Its lower thorns are as large as the spurs of roosters.
There are other roses, too.
There are many plum-trees bearing yellow fruit.
There are raspberry-bushes.
There are goldenglow
and fleur-de-lis
and hollyhock
and striped grass
and heliotrope
and Virginia creeper
and sunflower
and bleeding heart
and columbine
and peone
and lily of the valley
and English buttercup
and some little vine which runs in the grass and bears blue flowers and smells like geranium.

Today these things all drip with sounding, unceasing rain.
The leaves are all twitching, pelted with big drops —
yes, everything runs wild
for everything I love I leave alone.

III

— the bobolink singing,
singing when he wishes,
going where it pleases,
free to sing and go —

— the Irish-green bug which alighted, a moment ago, on the road,
hitching away wherever it wishes to go
or to where it knows not,
free to do what it can —

— the sensual, humming, fitful wind as fitful, constant and strong as the wind of the sea,
humming like the wind of the sea,
as sensual as the wind of the sea
though smelling of apple-blossoms
and all the new things drenched with days of rain and steaming beneath a triumphant sun —
steaming and glowing
at hand and afar
for miles
and miles —
hills of glowing green,
swamps of glowing green
all swept by the wind so like the wind of the sea,
the uncommanded wind —

## IV

— the gigantic, green-sprinkled willows leaning over the winding and peaceful and sunswept stream
and the flatboat which is tied at the foot of a willow —
the glossy and motionless pads and buds of lilies which rest upon the slow and muddy waters —
the thousands of leafing birches in the sunswept distance —
the ploughed and planted fields and the blossoming orchards in the sunswept distance —
the wooded and green-sprinkled hills in the sunswept distance, where I would live forever —

## V

The rising sun created its usual shimmer in the eastern vapors and along the quiet, green, ebbing waters of the inlet. Once in a while a wave would flash as it rolled and slumped on the tiny beach, barely sounding. Once in a while a sluggish, pungent breeze would waver toward the house.

About six o'clock an heavy fog rushed down the inlet, hiding the whole world save the near shore. It disappeared before long.

Two or three gulls were busy, after that.

It was all very ordinary, of course, but an enchantment, to me, for I had not seen the ocean for three years. That is a very long time.

After a while every suggestion of vapor disappeared from the skies. Then the flashings danced. Then the glimmerings undulated. Then the sheens surged. Out amongst them went the fishermen in their rapping motor-dories, or the cottagers in their thumping launches bound for Bath. Out amongst them

flapped the gulls and now and then bobbed the black head of a seal. The breezes, growing, brought in to me the odors I have always loved.

About eight o'clock we left Westport at the gray, tumbling wharf of the long-abandoned, gray, tumbling tidemill the symbolic distinction of which, even at blending-distance, refused to blend its power with that of the surrounding gaudy cottages. Just then we were near the fish-weirs. Beyond, was the dim finality of endless waters—

There was a gull's nest on one of the weirs.

Who has seen a gull's nest?
'Tis made of driftwood and seaweed.
'Tis as large as a bushel basket.
Whose hands have made this driftwood
by sawing
or chopping?
What winds have made this driftwood
by hurling dead trees to the waters
or breaking up ships?
What of the afterbirths of maiden ships is this driftwood?
What eyes of dreaming beings have seen these pieces of driftwood —
these bits of seaweed drifting in masses which look like serpents, undulating?
Whose fingers have reached over gunwales to grasp this seaweed?

## VI

I would have kissed you. Wasn't the night black?
None could have seen us, for the only light
was that which washed the heavens, from the town—
that light but glistening black against which lay
the curves and angles of near trees and roofs
in silhouette, jet. I could not see even you.
Am I not right? And, more than that, the air
was nervous with whatever kisses mean.

I would have kissed you. I have loved you long
and covetously.
Yet, what you think of me
seems not the thought of kisses and I, too,
enjoy a love of you that kisses kill.
Perhaps you would enjoy what kisses mean.
Perhaps desire, without the thought of death
confronting it, is lurking in your heart.
Yet I enjoy the love that kisses kill—
and kisses never fail. Yes, standing there,
I would have kissed you.
But I did not dare.

## VII

They played " In Zanzibar " and you could hear low hummings all over the electric. The violin had a ticklish portamento. The mandolins and guitar had the necessary kick. That was because the musicians were done with work, for the night, and wanted to play, really wanted to play. The hummings grew articulate and everyone came in on the last strain, as usual, harmonizing.

Oldtimers will remember the song.

It was back in the tinkling years.

It was before the fall of Saratoga.

Every night, when returning to Saratoga from the park, in the electrics, the string-orchestra from Newman's used to play. I can often hear it — you know how. I can often smell the delicate smoke-drifts from choice cigars. I often hear the sound of fascinating laughter. I see languid, lovely millinery and lovely or handsome countenances dreamy with the oblivious lusts of summer.

Myra was more than lovely, that night. Myra possessed the attenuated, intelligent, colorful loveliness of the typical Jewess. It is enough to say that her eyes were the eyes of a Jew. She wore a large, drooping panama the band of which was a plaited scarf of flimsy, buff silk, the plaits ending at the buckle on the side of the hat and the loosened, fringed ends falling around her shoulders or fluttering with the winds.

After that,
Myra sang.

" Tonight, the wraith of one I loved
out from the darkness came.
I trembled with forgotten awe
for the wraith, dear, was your name—

perhaps it was forgotten love,
but I trembled, just the same.

Yet, in another moment, I
from any spell was free,
when I but knew that what is dead
again can never be—
when I remembered, dear, that you
are dead—or dead to me."

## VIII

There are no more songs in my garden!
This dear old garden used to be wild with song!
Where are the songs of the grasshoppers?
The grasshoppers used to cling to the "baby's breath" and sing from morning to night.
The locusts used to crouch on the sun-dried gravel of the walk and rasp in the mid-day glare.
The songs of crickets came from unknown places.
There were the songs of robins
and sparrows
and swallows
and the humming of bees in the honeysuckle which used to meet the rosebush over the door.
All these were songs of joy.
There were many sad songs, too, and those songs were mine.

I sing no more, not even songs that are sad.
But where are the songs of my garden? Where are the other singers?

## IX

Who knows it is March?
The terpsichorean air above the brown expanse of pasture-hills
    is laughing to scorn the distant patches of flashing snow
    and is dancing as free women, drunk, might dance to the
    sound of beaten dishpans
and all is passion —
oh, all is passion!
The world is a passion!

Who is there in all the world, with a passion?
Whose passion is free to dance?
Whose passion dances above the things that are dead?
Whose passion dances above the things that are living and
    dead?
Whose passion is not confined to woman
or man
or coin
or book?
Who is there in all the world, with a passion?

## X

— the swirls of rain being blown from the tin roof, yonder,
gray and hissing swirls of rain;
the scores of swallows circling, fluttering, swaying through the
    high, gray depths of rain,
swooping up from behind the housetops
into the wild, gray depths of rain —

## XI

Fly away, away, away, if you must sing—
away, away, you dear brown devil of a sparrow,
for I am trying to think
and sing about my thought—
away, if you must sing.

You do not have to think before you sing.
Fly away, if you would sing, before I drive you away and end your song
for I am jealous of your song.

Fly away and sing above the dung of the streets
and leave me alone to sing above the dung of the ages.

## XII

— and the tears at dawn while the city was groaning with exhausted lust or goaded toil
or at night while the blackened housetops appeared to huddle like caterpillars on a tree proscribed by them, and whil the pavements rang with sleepless fear—
and I in my room, and alone, writhing upon the floor and waiting for your letters—

## XIII

There were the draggled thousands of old summer.
The beach and thoroughfares were season-sick with a scurvy of broken flasks
and peelings of bananas
and imbedded scraps of paper.
The shops and bazars were ragged with a commercial hemorrhage, wide.
There were men who happened to be men
and there were women who were baffled by being men.
There were women who did as women do
and there were women who would have done as men
and they mingled
and surged.
There was paint on the faces of many men
and women
and on signs
and dishes
and toy-balloons
and souvenirs.
There were rumblings and hissings of moving or pausing trains with ringing of their warning-bells.
There were greetings passive or silent or careless
and partings passive or dumb or cruel—
for the summer was old—
and there were giggles
and screams
and sighs
and moans
and sneers
and the utterings of the drunken
and the cries of hawkers
and the drone of the ballyho

and the music of places where they dance and press the breasts
and of places where they skate and press the palms
and of places where they watch the movies and press the legs.
They strolled or loitered around the bazars and searched for the lusts.
They sat on the sands and faced the ocean — and looked.
They lay on the sands and closed their eyes — and listened while the ocean sounded
and the trains rumbled
and the free women giggled
and the ballyho droned.

## XIV

— the sapling birches, whispering, white, with shaking, flickering leaves;
the clear, calm waters folding across the gray, flat rock which they barely cover,
sounding lowly, infrequently —

I wonder if she remembers, now,
the nights we lay beneath the birches
and watched the stars through the parting leaves?

## XV

My mother had long, white, tapering fingers when she was young.
My mother, when she was young, had large, black eyes
with long, curved lashes
and high, arched eyebrows —
those eyebrows which are passing away, with a passing race.
My mother had small, white, even teeth.
Her skin was white.
She wore, on a time, an high straw hat with an ostrich plume.
She wore an hoop
and a black silk dress
and a cashmere shawl from India.
When she was young she was beautiful.

My mother had an affair, when she was young,
for she has a thimble of solid gold
which was given to her
by a fellow who fought
in the Civil War,
an handsome chap —
a cousin, I think —
and she keeps it hidden.
Whoever gave it to her was killed at Richmond.

## XVI

— my sad old mother
hid in her chamber,
silently weeping
the last of her sorrows,
the sorrow of absence,
quivering, trembling —
perhaps in the garden
amongst the roses
wandering, lingering,
silently weeping,
smelling of roses
instead of my flesh —
her poor cold fingers
holding the roses —

## XVII

I came back home.
I passed through my dear old garden and looked for my cat
and called his name, for he always trots to meet me.
He did not come.

The roses were faded and falling
and the first few poppies were blooming.
In the kitchen my mother was waiting
with bloodshot eyes.
Her lips were cold
and she gave me one of her poor old kisses.
I clasped her in my arms
and pressed the cold flesh of her face to the flesh of my face.
The cat began to roll, on the floor.
I picked him up and kissed him
and smelled of his thick, sweet fur.

I entered the dark, sweet rooms.
The rooms of my house are quiet, dark and sweet.
The furniture is dark and some of it is old.
There is a pitcher, wide-mouthed, blue-designed, long crackled, English, used by the Goulds who settled by the Kennebec two hundred years ago.
There is an ancient Oriental shaving-dish which was brought from China by one of the Goulds who commanded a ship.
The dining-room table is made of black walnut and from it I ate when I was a child.
Yet, whether furnished with things that are old or new, the rooms are dark and sweet.
My mother, myself and my cat are happy there, but only when I am there.

## XVIII

—and this stubborn old thorn-bush which is long dead
and which was growing here when I was a child with one stubborn passion
which is not dead—

## XIX

We sat by the lake and watched the funny grackles.
They are always funny—
posing on scraggy tops of pines or the weird, dead limbs of aged firs;
alighting on the sides of leaning trunks and clinging, motionless;
running along the backs of the seats in the park;
dropping down from the trees, with the sway of falling leaves;
strutting along the rocks at the waters' edge;
flitting around through the foliage and uttering their quaint burlesques;
bobbing amongst the grasses and picking up popcorn dropped by the crowds;
fluttering, sailing low, along the surface of the lake,
seemingly imitating the swallows—
but they are always funny.
We watched them, often laughing.
That was yesterday, the day of gold
and blue
and green—
and black, for there were the grackles.

— the lake asleep, unmoving, gray, embossed by the lazy rain;
the hills beyond, gray-green and gray, some hidden by the low, gray scuds;
these, rather than the sound of the closing door of the taxicab that took him away —

I came up here in the rain, little grackles, just to see you. One of my friends — not forgetting my sad old mother and my ever happy cat — went away this noon. I came because I wanted to laugh. I hate the closing of the doors of hacks or the lids of trunks, although I love the beating and rolling of muffled drums.
I wish you knew how I love you.
I wish you knew how I love my friend.
I wish you knew how I love my mother.
I wish you knew how I love my cat — ah, yes, little Buttons. Ha! A fine lot you'd be if Butsey should ever prowl about these parts! He's a wonderful, castrated tom, big, beautiful past words, and a great hunter. When he catches a bird, I never take it away from him. Why should I? I don't eat live birds. Even if he should catch one of you, I would not interfere. Never mind. He will never come this way. It's up to you to keep out of his reach. He's a great comedian, too, by the way, He knows it. Your comedy is exquisite, and I am wondering if you know it.

Which one of you sat on a dead, weird limb of that half-dead fir, at sunset, yesterday —
the fir that stands in relief against the water, leaning?
The sun, when far in the west, was of fiery gold, molten gold, and the clouds were of white heat, purple and blood
and the waters were of opal
and of blood
and of yellow
and of silver

and of lavender
and down the waters came a narrow shaft of molten gold,
and you, whichever you were, sat black and motionless on that
black, weird limb
in relief against that molten shaft.
My sad old mother has a lacquered box from the Orient, with
just such a picture on the cover.

## XX

— the awesome azure whose fumid limits make the nearer
hundred summits most remote
and smear the farther hundreds into dreams of sight —

## XXI

— across the heights the June winds racing, unhindered;
whistling through the ripened grasses, in whims,
and around the rambling wall of rounded rocks, at will,
and forever rumbling in my ears;
rushing over the summit-fields
and somewhere away
and away
and away
into the fearful space of the valley
and somewhere afar
and afar
and afar,
perhaps to join the winds of other summits —

## XXII

— an ancient pine
bracing my back
and someone cuddling
behind the trunk,
away from the wind —
the humming wind —

## XXIII

She was an old free woman, forsaken.
She walked along the highroad, humming, looking below upon
the Sabbath-sleepy city which glimmered in the westward
light of an afternoon of September
and she saw that the world had collapsed
and she looked upon the ruins of the world
and they were yellow
and white
and brown
and she turned from the highroad into a logging-road
and began to wander
and began to murmur
and she murmured, in a kind of song,
scattering white-plumed seeds as she wandered —

" There is peace in the woods this afternoon, dear!
There is peace in the woods this afternoon, my child!
'Tis quieted!
'Tis easier to die!

Where are you now, dear?
Where are you now, my child?

Child, I am alone!
Child, I am wandering — alone — alone — where the weeds and vines are broken down and entangled
and tarnished!
Child, I am weeping!
Child, I am growing old!
Oh, the dead weeds rasp
and the dead vines rattle
and I love you!
Child, I love you!
Child, I am growing old!"

The afternoon light was as mellow as the glimmer of candles arranged around the faces of the dead
and the winds were as low of sound as the music which is played when we pass before corpses, and were spiced with the odors of death
and she sank upon her knees
and the dead weeds rasped
and the dead vines rattled
and she wept.

## XXIV

Last night I went, alone, and lingered in my old, wild garden
where there were scarlet poppy-women, passionate, who scorned the moon's mock potency;
where there were blue, closed cornflowers who waited for their chosen lord, in chastity;
where there were columbines who made a cuckold of the sun — accepting dew-jewels from the moon;
where there were many weeds —
and the winds which came from the somewheres of the south
stirred the odors of mint
and of roses
and of heliotrope
and were hot
and the moon was crossed by a smear of vapor — yellow and thin —
and was as teasing as a nipple protruding through lace
and the hoofs of horses clicked
and the voices of riders murmured
and the city groaned
and the distance of the stars possessed an horror
and I bowed my head.

## XXV

— with the midnight winds that sweep the huddling scuds
above this city of tombs —
in the rumbling rain that flashes and glitters in the lights of
this city of tombs —
among the cringing ghosts that hurry through the rain
and fear it
or loathe it
and thrive in this city of tombs —
wandering, remembering your kisses —

## XXVI

— a form which used to be by a window, every night —
the form of a woman
who sat in darkness,
motionless, always
back from the frame —
not every night,
for sometimes standing in the doorway,
the door half closed,
but always in darkness —

## XXVII

— the light of the wild spring sun now sprawling upon the
breasts of the earth,
sometimes to press and embrace in the fearful passion of inter-
course,
sometimes to touch and withdraw —

## XXVIII

We were swimming by moonlight.
The moon was high.
The water was warm.
The water was still.
At night, fresh water is too warm, for me, and has an odor which I cannot like.
It is sinister, too, but I love it for that. Rocks, big and round, on the bottom, near the shore, gleam like the eyes of clumsy monsters. The depths are restful, vast in vagueness. You feel that you must explore them, but the monsters lurk by the shore and watch you. When you swim, it seems that you do not move, that the monsters are holding you back, but your body feels like one of the elements of which the water is but another, and you have no fear. 'Tis a communion. 'Tis an embrace of strangers.

The lights in the windows of cottages were streaming down the lake, beside the stream of the moon.

One of the bunch was floating and looked like an ancient god or warrior in cameo. Two were amusing themselves by swimming between the legs of each other, under water, first one, then the other standing on bottom with legs spread apart, like those of the Colossus. Another was far out, doing the crawl, his ivory arms of classic muscle gleaming, occasionally flashing, amidst the gleaming and flashing eddies which they caused. One was diving from the wharf, a vision of darting, ivory lightning, disappearing in the cloud of dusky glass.

We were noisy.

For a while we had forgotten.

## XXIX

— and my mother used to sit by the road on Sunday mornings
and listen for the sound of a distant bell
which was lone and so sweet that it seemed descending even
from the unclouded sun
and, waiting, she gathered roadside roses just like these
and arranged them on her hat
and sang
and sang
and sang —

## XXX

There is an hush.
The summer people come,
gibbering foolishly along the wharf.
The steamer-whistle screeches and the boat
pulls off, with all the sounds a steamer makes.
The swimmers shout and laugh, at water-play.
The naphtha-boats pass, rumbling, to and fro.
The trains pass, roaring, on the farther shore —
the autos, panting, on the heights, and yet,
there is an hush.
The hush is sinister.
The winds move silently across the lake,
with seeming care, as though respectfully,
and cause no motion on the watery miles.
Birches are motionless and pines are dumb.
The grackles swoop without an utterance
and rarely swoop. No other birds appear.
None sing. The skies are fumid and the sun
seems sullen at the silence of its spouse.

The year is at the climax of her lusts.
She holds her loveliest flowers in her arms.
Her breasts are bulging for her suckling fruits.
Yet she is silent.
She has found her first
gray hair and pauses, breathless, to behold.

## XXXI

'Tis well enough that my face is hid in the grass!
'Tis well enough to hear the sounds of the winds and the voice
of whom I love!

## XXXII

I feel as though I must make love to you.
There is a certain daring in your eyes.
There is a certain tremor in your voice.
Your thoughts are those which promise life at large.
Ah, but it is the August of my heart,
and what we sow in August bears not much.

Yesterday, I rode homeward, on the train.
The August world is marvelous with flowers.
Hundreds of ox-eye daisies are in bloom.
Hundreds of crimson lilies flower, too,
with hundreds of others which I cannot name,
yet all begin their growing in the spring—

and this for wildflowers.
In my own sweet spring
I set to grow the flower of my love,
yet I was a poor sower, for I chose
coarse clay, and, though with passion and great deeds
I fertilized that clay, it was not fit
to make a thing of beauty of my flower—

and this for planted flowers.
So, 'tis done.
There is that certain daring in your eyes.
There is that certain tremor in your voice.
Your thoughts seem those of life at large, and yet,
although I now know how to choose my soil,
I dare not sow, for August is too late.

## XXXIII

—and the green so new
and the ground so old
and out of the ground upon which I stand
coming the new green grass of the hills—

## XXXIV

— the remembrance of that afternoon in that winter of horror
when I kneeled by a window and pressed an hand
and looked away across the snow-capped roofs at a distant spire
the belfry of which was clogged and capped with snow
and beyond which was a crimson sun
and around which scores of swallows circled
and circled
and circled—

## XXXV

He looked up.

There were the stars, far, fantastic, limited in number, to the vision, by the housetops. Once in a while wreaths of smoke from his cigar obscured them. The confused illuminations from the streets and shops dimmed them. Before them was a ghost-dispassionate, almost imperceptible haze — a facecloth drawn across the eyes of dying summer. There were the stars, however. They pierced everything. Sometimes they seemed to him like the eyes of impassably respectable mill-agents' daughters with marmorean skins, who are driven past in elegant turnouts and who smile at space. Sometimes they appeared to bulge, as though whatever was supposed to retain them was not solid enough. Too, many fell, and for the same reason, it was probable, he thought. He shuddered. An unnerving sense of insecurity flooded through him, throbbing. He looked away from the stars. At the end of the avenue, beyond the hundreds of electric lights and the thousands of beings with glittering eyes, was an unpenetrated darkness. It hid the sea. He strolled through the crowds of beings with glittering eyes and went into the unpenetrated darkness and crossed the sands of the sea which, even at hand, was obscured. He sat on the sands. He was startled. There were the stars again, and nothing limited their numbers. The darkness was penetrated, as before, when but a strip of sky was to be seen between the housetops. He shivered. He listened. He looked about, glancing. He looked up, staring. The facecloth seemed thinner than before, though it became more closely woven afar over the water-distances. It was all wonderful. He breathed long breaths. He peered.

The waves made their noises and were not seen
and the winds flourished the noises of the waves
and came with the smells of the waves to the man
and flourished them

and he was quickened by the smells
and would have arisen and have conquered an half of the earth
yet he gasped
and looked above
and looked afar
and looked about,
for it seemed to him that he was being watched.

## XXXVI

This morning, mine, while we walked in the shimmering pearls
and purples of winter—
pearl expanses, purple skies—
do you remember the shimmering pearls and purples?—
this morning, mine, mine own, I turned my face away from you
and wept, once, twice, and more
O mine, mine own, I turned my head because I would not let
you see my tears!
I gazed away at the shimmering pearls and purples.
Oh, pearl and purple is our love!
At last our love is pearl and purple!

Do you remember the charming little wood of beeches—
gray beeches, straight and clean-appearing—
beeches with leaves still clinging here and there, brown, curled,
rattling?
Some of the leaves of beeches cling all winter, till the new life
comes
with the new suns
and the new winds
and my love is like those leaves that cling all winter
and I am clinging to you, O mine, mine own!
O winds of winter, let me stay till spring?

## XXXVII

I love the rain for its thousands of sounds
and its liveliness in cutting the air
and its way of striking the puddles it makes, splashing, sending up millions of little pearls — each in the midst of a flashing circle.
I love it for its smell
and its feeling on the flesh.
Some nights I go out naked and sprawl in the grass, in the rain.

I love the rain for it keeps from my sight
the greater part of the human race.

## XXXVIII

— when I went to school and wondered why they taught me numbers,
since none could count the butterflies or flowers —

## XXXIX

That night we were both dizzy with bad whiskey. Our chop suey seemed an hour coming to us. I rested my head between my fists, dazed, collapsing upon the table, and closed my eyes.
I waited, humming a dear old song.
I waited, hearing the sounds of the sliding slippers of the chinks who rushed
and cackled.
From the kitchen came the cacklings of voices
and the hissings of grills
and the rattlings of dishes.
Around me sounded the gigglings of free women
and the mumblings of them who brought them
and the cursings of roughnecks
and I heard and heard the sounds of the sliding slippers of the chinks.

Once I raised my head, to look—
for I was grouchy with hunger—
and I filled a spoon with the dark brown soy,
when he who was with me said—
"Do you remember the times when we used to run in the fields where the daisies and strawberries grew—
the times when we used to capture grasshoppers big and green and make them give us molasses?"

## XL

—and once, these winds which come from unknown places brought me a seed of the tree which none can name
and which has grown to an height that is greater than mine.

## XLI

To me, the heat was disgusting.

It was only when I sucked the fumes of my cigarette into me that I was conscious of breathing, so I pulled each drag to the bottom of my lungs where it struck with an ecstatic thud. Nothing else seemed to be either passing into my lungs or out of them.

It was depressingly hot.

For an hour or more, that noon, I lolled in the shaded door of the barn, smoking, sweating, gasping, desperate with the general depression, relieved only by feeling the tobacco-smoke pass into and out of my lungs and I made a diversion of blowing whiffs at a caterpillar which clung to the tender leaves at the end of a long and low-hanging branch of woodbine.

Then came the little old woman from across the alley. She was bent and wrinkled but quick of step and glance. The step was firm. The glance was sharp. She had once been a grand dame and had commanded servants and her perfumery had cost six dollars an ounce. On this day she wore a percale dress which was greasy and which was shielded in front by a greasier apron. Her perfumery was the sweat of a laboring body. While passing the garden she picked a green string-bean from the vines and began to chew it. She saw me. Uttering a little squeak of delight, she came and sat near me, on a pile of old boards.

"Ain't this a hell of a day?" she mumbled, munching the bean.

"Certainly is," I said, turning my head to blow the smoke away from her.

She watched the smoke vanish.

"Blow your cussed old smoke this way!" she commanded, mumbling, munching the bean. "You know very well how I like it. I haven't smoked since the time" — and the poppies caught her eye.

So, after that, I blew the smoke her way
and she munched the bean and said no more for a while
but sniffed the smoke
and trotted one foot
and gazed at the poppies.

Soon, I arose
and gathered some poppies —
nine scarlet poppies —
and gave them to her
and blew a whiff in her face
and she laughed and went home to warm over some soup.

## XLII

While you were talking to me, little fellow, and grunting between your gulps of lemonade,
I was thinking of a sunset of summer when I sat on a shore, by a luminous sea,
and watched a steamship pass from sight, toward England.

## XLIII

Last night I kissed your picture seven times
and, with the last of the long, wet kisses,
I pressed your likeness to my lips for many minutes,
longing for death — for you are the slow poison
which has now destroyed the best of me!

## XLIV

There are always two or three women behind the curtain, drinking.
There is room for five or even six people, crowded.
There must have been that many last night, for we were surely crowded.

Eugenie was there.
'Genie's a gipsy—
a Russian gipsy—
and old friend of mine.

She is a beauty. Two years ago
she was a wonder of the world—
a skin of olive porcelain
tinged with translucent, natural red
faintly glowing; big, black eyes
as mellow and wild as those of a mare
and with lashes long and curved;
white teeth such as one may see but in the showcase of a dentist.

She had a peculiar manner of tilting her head forward and looking up, dreamily, under those long and curved lashes, when, with her countenance softened by low lights, I have more than once wanted to leap at her and bite her. Now, she is more or less worn, poor kid. Eugenie was never respectable. She was always a roughneck. She went at life early and furiously and probably will be in a frightful condition in two more years.

Last night, in the middle of a gag I was telling, the curtain moved the least bit. We all looked up, expecting to be obliged to crowd more closely, when in walked a pregnant cat.

Our surprise was vented in good nature, of course.

We all laughed.

"*A toute outrance!*" exclaimed an handsome, husky young Canadian, with a twinkling wink.

"Naughty kitty!" giggled 'Genie, archly, bending over and snapping her fingers, beckoningly.

We all laughed again.

The mother-cat started toward the powdered, perfumed and partially fuddled girl. She didn't hesitate. She was confident. Neither female saw anything unusual in the other. They were both good fellows. As she went past, she waddled a bit, yet there was more charm to her hitching stride than her most mincing movements, during heat, could ever have possessed. We all patted her. We all wished her well. Then there was a dead silence. No hall of council ever knew a moment of greater suspense than that moment, in that dive. A queen in the same condition as that mother-cat must be a comparative slouch. The animal was proud in a pride that a queen is unable to feel. 'Genie rubbed her belly.

'Genie knew what to do.

## XLV

"Last night he noticed the round, yellow moon
and its shimmer
and the bars of budding limbs across that yellow moon.
Last night he lingered, apart from me, for moments, looking upon the spires.
Into the moon a spire ran —
even as a dagger into a brain.
He stood alone.
He watched the spires.

Last night I looked upon the round, yellow moon
and its shimmer
and the black and sharp-lined shadows
out from which rose the bars of budding limbs.
Last night came the first of the winds of spring.
I smelled them, drawing breaths he could not measure.
Last night I saw a policeman — a brute — a monster of beautiful countenance —
who passed us.
His shoulders were broad and his legs were big.
He glanced at me and his eyes glittered — flashed — for he faced the moon.
He passed and entered the sharp-lined shadows.
The sounds of the city absorbed the sounds of his heels.
Last night came the first of the winds of spring.

Into the moon a spire ran —
even as a dagger into a brain."

That's what she told me, at least,
while we were dancing around.

## XLVI

I want your body in my bed, tonight!
I want you beside me, covered with the clothes,
when I may press your hot, sweet flesh
and kiss it many times, embracing, gasping with your gasps!
I want you beside me, kissing me!

Oh, let the bare trees rise, unmoving, in the cold March moonlight and throw their shadows which look like tattered lace upon the dirty remnants of snow
and let the dog howl afar on the distant heights
and let the mumbling drunks come home, crunching beneath their feet the ice that coats the puddles
and let the moon shine on until it wanes
and let the stars shine on until they are dimmed
and let the morning come and glimmer through the old rose curtains—
only let us kiss, before we sleep!

## XLVII

This afternoon the pied cat gamboled over the clean, green grass of the spring,
bounding, blinded, into the sunlight—
after a fly—
after a bee—
leaping, blinking, after the beams which strained through the blossoms and clean, green leaves of the plum-trees spreading above us both.
The pied cat rolled and sprawled, at will, upon the clean, green grass of the spring.
He listened.
He glanced.
He sniffed—and rolled and writhed in the light which was lambent upon his wind-waved fur.
Down through the blossoms surged the winds—oh, they were treacherous, yes, and the ground was pungent with things which are new.
From the pungent ground the angleworms crawled to splice in passion till morning
and every blossom was luminous.
Luminous were the clear, clean greens
and twice—oh, twice illumed was the world!

## XLVIII

It had been snowing all day.

I dined at the home of a friend, that evening. Before being seated, I telephoned to mother, as she was alone, at home, and was used to having somebody with her, and needed somebody near, in fact. She said that everything was all right at the house and that she was feeling well, which put my mind at rest and left it with nothing to do but to enjoy the dinner and to do justice to the happening sentiments.

"But — " she added, just as I was about to hang up the receiver — "Buttons is looking for you. He is sitting out by the hitching-post, in the storm, waiting, and looking up and down the street, You ought to see him rubbering through the snows. He has been wild since four o'clock."

"Has he? "

I laughed, though I didn't feel like laughing. I looked out into the dining-room. They were waiting for me.

My little cat was waiting for me, too.

He always waits, looking, about four o'clock.

"Well, goodbye," I said, as softly as I could.

"Goodbye. Come home early? "

"I will."

I hung up. A swirl of snow hissed past the house. The windows rattled, while a wind moaned and wailed through the blinds
and another moaned and wailed in the chimney
and a thousand moaned and wailed around the people in the streets
and drowned their moans
and wails
and curses
and laughter
and hurled the snows against them.

## XLIX

— my little friend, my cat, approaching, returning homeward
for something to eat,
his white feet twinkling against the dark gray ashes of the
alley,
twinkling like stars—

— at night, when I return, his white breast moving here and
there in the murk of the cellar window
as a star seems to move when one looks at it for a long, long
time,
one restless as he—

— the nights when I come and call him from the cellar, when
we eat together, sometimes even out of one plate,
we, two beings—

## L

— when I sat alone in a second growth of grass
while muttering winds were prophesying change,
while there was light which seemed afraid to enter the clouds
which were weaving together, slowly, toward the west—
light which retreated and left upon those clouds a weary
lavender
which saddened them
and saddened the city in the valley where I could see more
buildings than I had been able to see, a month before, as the
leaves of the trees in town were even then beginning to drop
by twos
and threes—

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## LI

— where I used to come to weep
and fear
and dream
and shudder!

Above the door which has not been swung since others filed
through, weeping, yet hangs the climbing rose-bush
amongst whose rambling lower limbs I cowered
(foliage, flowers, musk and moonlight!)
touching the thorns — some green and even tender;
amongst whose rambling lower limbs I lingered
(limbs dismantled, barren moonlight!)
touching the thorns all sear and even metallic;
touching the thorns — for there were many thorns —
yes, grasping the thorns!

There are the towering apple-trees through whose high leaves
I watched the happening planets, murmuring to each —
" Do they, too, count your flashes? "

Here are the hollyhocks — gigantic hollyhocks —
through which, in August, muttered horror-winds
for which I listened even in June.

## LII

Every day is Sunday, with Madame.

One Sunday, I awoke at dusk and went out.

The faint glow behind the heights of Auburn was having its old struggle with the lights of the streets.

I passed the tenement where Madame lives and turned into alley, for I was going to the bar-room by the back stairs. It was nearer.

They were singing, upstairs at Madame's.

Madame was singing, at the time.

Madame has a contralto voice, not trained — just natural, as she is. As for me, I hate trained voices, anyhow.
Once in a while she has a note
which makes me think of a summer moon
lolling upon an ebbing tide,
or one of those roaming winds of spring
which fans and fans that old desire
to board a train bound for any old place,
or the narcotic conception of having nothing to do till tomorrow. There are many others besides me who are affected the same way, for when I passed, that evening, there was a crowd of perhaps fifty standing around in groups beneath Madame's windows, listening, all men of course. On the next corner was a Salvation Army corps, pounding, raving and howling before another crowd, warning people of future days of inevitable anguish or assuring them of periods of conditional happiness to come. But Madame, faking a smart accompaniment on her piano, sang —

"Hark! A voice from far away!
' Listen and learn,' it seems to say!
'All the tomorrows shall be as today!
All the tomorrows shall be as today!' "

Madame had the biggest crowd.

I went down the alley. There were sounds of useless arguments and squabbles and of desperate laughter — there was holiday laughter, which is always desperate — yes, and there was the sound of a voice from far away.

Or rather, Madame's voice could still be heard.

## LIII

— memories, shudders, a few dry tears,
till your song was done and its low, last chord had eloped with
a silent breeze
out of the window
into the night —
this black, hot night with its crimson, crescent moon —
Diana tired of virginity —
then all we said
and all we did
in this black, hot night with its crimson, crescent moon —

## LIV

The buildings were winter-bleached and wrenched.
The streets were ragged and unclean.

The sun smiled on, nevertheless.

It was a new spring sun, which was smiling up there, all alone, in a pure, glimmering sapphire, a merry sun which offered to all mankind the dispensation of laughter and kissing and dancing and revelry and everything else that man loves and should have, if he desires.

The sun smiled on and on.

Few knew it, however.

Nobody cared.

Everybody had a sour look.

Nobody's eyes twinkled.

Those who knew me nodded and passed, breasting a raving wind, loathing the weather and apparently everything else and hurrying wherever they were going, with very wise and serious expressions.

Suddenly an old-time lady of leisure approached. Her eyes were twinkling. It was surely a relief to meet even one whose eyes twinkled. The woman was swinging along through the raving wind which didn't annoy her in the least. She has passed forty, this one. Her cheeks, sunken a bit, are apt to be sallow save after her short trips to the salubrious climate of the Lablache desert. However, she is a stunner, even now. Her eyes are small and black, comprehensive, brilliant with inexhaustible revelry. They twinkle continually, full of the devil. They will never need bella donna. I have never known her personally but have noticed her, for years, around public places and have known all about her, of course. She knows who I am, of course, and probably all about me, and yesterday we spoke for the first time. We couldn't help speaking.

Her smile was that of any good fellow.
Her voice was the sound of a solstring serenade.

Wrapped in furs
she swung away
with a roaring gust
which rattled signs
and blew the hat of a bank clerk into the street.

After we had passed, I laughed outright like a child, for I, too, am a child of the sun.

## LV

What can be said?
What can be said
when the pericarps of the wayside rose
turn crimson, with leaves at the forest-edge?
when all of the leaves of the countryside
are coarse and their greens are dulled by dust?
when the seeds of the meadow-grasses are dried
and are bowed and hiss with the nervous winds?
when, at the last, comes the goldenrod—
head-dress of Autumn's steed whose gaudy caparison is gemmed with the fruits of things and the last low-trailing fringes of which drag, frayed, in the old, gray mires
of what is dead—
when the shrunken river has broadened the marsh?
when the water-snakes bask long in the sun?
What can be said?

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